AGRICULTURE IN THE YUKON

YUKON LIVESTOCK & AGRICULTURE ASSOCIATION

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Agriculture in Yukon has been a fact since the 1890's. During the Gold Rush, 30,000 people - men, women and children, required food. In Dawson, horses were used extensively as beasts of burden and a means of transportation. These animals and other livestock such as beef and dairy cattle were in evidence and required feed.

Agriculture in Yukon today has a very promising future. The high cost of transportation contributes greatly to the poor condition and lack of freshness of produce arriving from the southern provinces. It is not an uncommon situation to receive eggs of unknown age, meat that spoils within days - sometimes hours since the time of purchase.Powdered milk and other "fresh food" variations are a fact of life in the North. It would not be difficult to understand the need for Agriculture here.

This industry and its spin-offs: jobs, machinery, parts, fuel and other support services, will add to the stabilization of Yukon's economy. The orderly development of Agriculture in Yukon has already begun. I believe that such steps as: designation of lands for agriculture, release of land in manageable units such as 160 acre units so small operators can cope financially, and the reserving of land for projected expansion of established farms are all moves in the right direction.

Yukon already has established farming operations in livestock such as swine, beef, poultry and dairy; hay and green feed production and vegetable producers. In conversation with many of these operators, it was stated that there were no problems with selling their products. In fact, not being able to meet the demand was more likely the problem.

The future aim of the Association is to supply Yukon with the basic foodstuffs produced here in Yukon. Once this is accomplished, we intend to ship to world markets. One example would be to the Asian rim countries.

The environmental impact of Agriculture in Yukon is another factor that must be considered. Although there has been a concern voiced for the wildlife, it has been found in Alaska that the wildlife is not only maintained but actually thrives in conjunction with agriculture. I have made similar observations in my own experience here in Yukon. Coyotes, foxes, hawks and grouse have increased in number during the eight years that it has taken me to put my farm into full production.

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I also believe that compared to the other industries in Yukon such as

Mining

Big Game Hunting

Tourism

and Government

Agriculture is one of the industries that is most compatable with the environment.

As well as contributing in the aformentioned ways, agriculture provides a real alternative lifestyle for those who seekit. There is a growing number of Yukoners who are already involved in making Agriculture a fact in Yukon.

With continued sharing of knowledge and support, Agriculture can grow and flourish, and make an even greater contribution to our northern lifestyle.

Thank you.

Art Hutchison
President
Yukon Livestock and Agricultural Association

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